Mark-48 Torpedo War - Shot

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THE AUSOME POWER OF THE SUBMARINE LAUNCHED MARK-48 TORPEDO

On Monday June 14, 1999 the Australian Collins class submarine, HMAS *Farncomb*, fired a Mark-48 war-shot torpedo at the 28 year old former Destroyer Escort *TORRENS*.

The firing was part of the *Collins* class trials requirements and was designed to validate the submarine's combat system. The submerged *Farncomb* fired the Mark-48 torpedo at the stationary hulk of the 2700-ton Destroyer Escort from over the horizon. The plume of water and fragments shot some 150 meters skyward as the blast of the torpedo cut the ship in two. The stern section sank rapidly after the torpedo hit, the bow section remained afloat but sank sometime later.

The torpedo warhead contains explosive power equivalent to approximately 1200 pounds of TNT. This explosive power is maximized when the warhead detonates below the keel of the target ship, as opposed to striking it directly. When the detonation occurs below the keel, the resulting pressure wave of the explosion "lifts" the ship and can break its keel in the process. As the ship "settles" it is then seemingly hit by a second detonation as the explosion itself rips through the area of the blast. This combined effect often breaks smaller targets in half and can severely disable larger vessels.

The Mark-48 torpedo used in this test is a variation of the MK-48 ADCAP (Advanced Capability) torpedo developed for the United States Navy.

Photos and Mk-48 Torpedo information provided by Maritime Headquarters and DSTO Australia. Photos by PO Scott Connolly and AB Stuart Farrow.

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